
* " WAY DOWN EAST " *
* Property of *
* Johnnie *
* Speer *
* * * * *

"WAY DOWN EAST"

CAST

EZRA TOMPKINS	CHARACTER LEAD
HANK STUMP	G. STRING SHERIFF
HARVEY BARTON	HEAVY
MEDWARD TOMPKINS	LEAD
RUBE HAWKINS	TOBY COMEDY
DORA DEAN	EMOTIONAL LEAD
LOUISA	CHARACTER

SETTINGS

ACT ONE.. Exterior of Ezra Tompkins farm Barn on L. and House on the R.

ACT TWO .. Interior of Ezra Tompkin's in the winter time.

ACT THREE. Interior of Ezra Tompkins home two years later summer time.

PROPS

Bench
Pan
Pint bottle
Table and chair
Letter
Snow effects

" WAY DOWN EAST "

LOUISA

(DISCOVERED AT RISE SEATED ON BENCH BEHIND HOUSE, PEELING POTATOES)
My but it's a hot day.

RUBE

(ENTERS FROM L 3) Gosh, I feel as if I was going to melt.

LOUISA

Hot day isn't it, Rube?

RUBE

Well, if the place the preachers preach about is any hotter, then I don't want to go there. I'd rather go to (NAME OF LOCAL TOWN X. TO WELL GETS DRINK OF WATER) Gosh. I feel like filling up on water all the time.

LOUISA

Why, don't you put a few drops of lemon juice in the water? It's powerful good to quench thirst.

RUBE

I believe I'll do that, Miss Wiggins. Got any lemons in the house?

LOUISA

Yes, go in the house and help yourself. You'll find them in the pantry

RUBE

All right, Miss Wiggins. Much oblige. (EXITS IN HOUSE R.)

LOUISA

(CALLS TO HIM) You'll find a pail of fresh water on the kitchen table.

RUBE

(CALLS FROM HOUSE) All right, Miss Wiggins.

LOUISA

(CALLS) And say don't you dare get into my pies or I'll wring your neck.

RUBE

(CALLS FROM HOUSE) Gosh, don't do that Miss Wiggins.

EZRA

(ENTERS FROM BARN L. CALLING) Rube, oh Rube, where be you?

LOUISA

He's in the house, Ezra.

EZRA

What's he doing in there? (HAS HORSE COLLAR AND PIECE OF HARNESS IN HIS HAND)

LOUISA

He's getting a drink of water with lemon juice in it to quench his thirst.

EZRA

Well, he'd better hurry back to the barn and get to work or I'll tan his jacket for him. (SITS BY TREE ON BENCH, CALLS) Say, Rube, what are you doing in the house so long?

RUBE

(CALLS BACK) Aw, I'm changing my shoesp I want to cool my feet.

EZRA

I'll cool your head with a club if you don't hurry up and get to work.

RUBE

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE EATING A PIECE OF PIE) You keep still or I won't wear no shoes a t all. I 'll go bare footed.

LOUISA

Say, you young imp, you've been into my pies. (SLAPS AT HIM)

RUBE

(DUCKS AWAY FROM HER) Just missed me. (LAUGHS) Haw! Haw! Haw!

LOUISA

If you don't learn to leave them pies alone, I'll scald you with hot water.

RUBE EZRA

Now see here, Rube, I want you to have plent to eat, but eating pie in the middle of the fore-noon is out of the question. You oug t to have more sense than that.

RUBE

Ah now you go on. You had two pieces of pie yesterday fore-noon. People who live in glass houses should dress in the dark. (LAUGHS) Haw. Haw.

EZRA

(RISES) Consarn yer hide, I'll--(KICKS AT HIM AND NEARLY FALIS)

RUBE

(RUNS OVER L.) Just missed me, ha ha ah ahw!

EZRA

(ANGRY) Now you get into that barn and get to forking back that hay.

RUBE

All right, Mr. Tompkins, I'll get 'er done all right, aon't you feet. (X TO TWELL) Say, Miss Wiggins, do you want to see something swell?

LOUISA

What is it?

RUBE

Goshdurn it to be honest with you, do you want to see something swell?

LOUISA

(INTERESTED) Why yes--

RUBE

Then soak a sponge in water. Haw. Haw! Haw! (EXITS L. 3)

EZRA

I'd like to fire that feller, but I'll swan help is so hard to get now days. Consarn him. (WIPE FOREHEAD WITH HANKERCHIEF) He's got me completely set up. My blood is jest boiling.

LOUISA
Yes, I know he's an awful pest. I'll get you a good cool drink of butter milk. It will do you a heap of good. (GOING INTO HOUSE)

EZRA

All right, Louisa, and bring me my sewing needles so I can fix this harness.

LOUISA

Very well, Ezra. (EXITS IN HOUSE)

EZRA

(CALLS TO HER) OH say Louisa, did Edward get back yet?

LOUISA

Why I don't know. Did he go some place?

EZRA

Yes. I sent him over to Mr. Leonard's place to see if he could borrow their hay rake.

LOUISA

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE WITH GLASS OF MILK, SEWING NEEDLE, AND WAX END) Here's your butter milk, Cousin Ezra. You just drink it right down kinder slow like. It's nice and sweet and cold.

EZRA

Thank you, Cousin Louisa. (TAKES GLASS IN HIS HAND)

LOUISA

And here's your sewing needles. (PLACES THEM ON BENCH) So Edward went over to Leonards did he?

EZRA

Yes, he should have been back over an hour ago. (DRINKS)

LOUISA

Maybe he's setting under a shade tree sparkling Elsie Leonard.

EZRA

I don't know about that. Edward is kinder----er--bashful when he's around Elsie.

LOUISA

Well, I don't know why he should be afraid of Elsie. She's going to be his wife, aint she?

EZRA

I hope so, Louisa, I hope so. She will make a good wife for my son, Edward.

LOUISA

Then why don't he ask her and have it settled? You may think he is shy of her, but it's my opinion that there aint no man who's afraid to ask a girl to marry him, if he really wants her.

EZRA

Of course he wants her. Besides her folks and me are agreed on it. And it was his mother's wish before she died that Edward should marry Elsie Leonard.

LOUISA

LOUISA
Well, I'm doubtful just the same.

EZRA

What do you mean, Louisa?

LOUISA
I mean that I don't believe that Edward cares for Elsie -that is not enough to marry her.

EZRA

Oh pshaw! Why it's all understood that my son, Edward is going to marry Elsie Leonard why they've been play mates ever since they were little tots. Bless their hearts.

LOUISA

But there's many a slip bet'wixt the cup and the lip, and yet I'd rather see Edward marry her than any other girl I know of.

EZRA

Well, you'll see it come to pass. Don't you fret on it. My heart has been set on it for years.

HANK HANK STUMB

(ENTERS L. U. HE IS A RUBE CONSTABLE WEARS BADGE ON OUTSIDE OF HIS COAT. HE HAS A STIFF LEG AND WALKS WITH A CANE. WEARS RUSTY BOOTS RUN DOWN AT THE HEEL. HE TALKS IN A HIGH PITCHED VOICE) Good morning, Louisa. You're looking bright as an apple blossom. (TURNS AND SEES EZRA) Morning, Ezra.

EZRA

Good morning, Hank. I was just wondering if you was likely to see any one here besides Louisa. (WINKS AT LOUISA)

HANK

Huh. Think you're smart, don't ye?

EZRA

How's things over at the village? Got any news to tell us?

HANK

By gum, I've got big news and plent of it. Burglars broke into the post office again last night.

EZRA LOUISA

(SURPRISED) Do tell!

EZRA

Is that so--did they get much?

HANK

Two dollars and seventy five cents in postage stamps.

EZRA

Anything else?

HANK

Fourteen post cards, and a dollar and eighteen cents in cash. Pretty heavy loss to the government.

LOUISA

Well, did you get after the burglars?

HANK
You jest bet I did.

EZRA

Dkd you catch them?

HANK

Nope, but I've got my eye on a couple of suspicious characters here in town, and I'll land them in the lock up if they fool around me.

EZRA

Huh yes, no doubt. Everybody well over your way, Hank?

HANK

By gum not exactly. Josh Bibble's boy is down with the measles.

EZRA

You don't tell me.

HANK

Yep, and his little girl has got the measles and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if the baby is going to have the whoopin' cough.

LOUISA

What, the whooping cough in July?

HANK

That's what the doctor said and he ought to know 'cause he's the doctor

LOUISA

I've never heard of the whoopin' cough in July.

HANK

Well, Louisa, you know Josh Bibble always was unfortunate. Why I wouldn't be a bit surprised to hear any time that Josh's potatoes got frost bit in the dead of summer. (FILLS PIPE AND LIGHTS IT)

LOUISA

Reckon you're right, Ezra. Sit down, Hank.

HANK

Believe I will. I've been on my feet a good bit lately keepin' my eye on them burlgars. (X TO BENCH AT WELL AND SITS DOWN THROWS LEG UP ON BENCH) Oh oh.

EZRA

What's the matter, Hank?

HANK

My rheumaticky leg. It bothers me a lot lately, got to keep my eye on it. (TAKES BOTTLE FROM POCKET AND DRINKS) I don't mind it much thou as long as I can get Long Life Bitters. How's your health, Mrs. Wiggins?

LOUISA

Oh pretty fare. I've been enjoying another spell of the neuraligie.

EZRA

Say, Louisa, why don't you get Hank to give you some of His Long Life Bitters? They might do you some good.

I believe it will. (X TO HANK) Let me try them bitters of yours, Hank.

HANK

(QUICKLY PUTS BOTTLE IN HIS POCKET) Oh no they aint good for what ails you.

LOUISA

Huh! If they're good enough for you, I don't see why they aint good enough fur me.

HANK

They're too strong for the feminine sex.

LOUISA

Well, you needn't be so stingy with them. (X BACK TO BENCH R.) I don't want them no how.

HANK

Getting along towards dinner time, aint it, Mr. Tompkins?

EZRA

I reckon so, Hank.

HANK

Thought I'd drop in and tell ye about the robbery and take dinner with ye, if ye don't mind,

EZRA

Why, Hank, you're perfectly welcome. (GLANCES AT LOUISA) as far as I'm concerned.

HANK

Thanks. How about you, Miss Wiggins?

LOUISA

Oh, I reckon we've got plenty to eat, and I can fix a place for you at the table.

HANK

Thank you for the hearty invitation you extend to me and I accept with thanks--many thanks--thank you. (RUBE ENTERS FROM L. 3rd) Say, Mr. Tompkins, I think your scousin Miss Wiggins, is a mighty fine woman.

EZRA

Yes, Hank, she'sparfically all right. She's a good house keeper, been a great comfort to me, she's kept home like and cheerful as possible about the house ever since my poor dead wife died. (LOOKS TOWARD HEAVEN) Heaven, rest her soul in peace. (WIPES TEARS AWAY) Yes, Louisa, has been my old stand by ever since.

HANK

By gum, she aint so durn old either, fact is Miss Louisa Wiggins is getting younger and better looking every day. (SMILES AT HER)

LOUISA

(PLEASED) Thank you, Hank. (BUSY PEELING POTATOES)

HANK

Oh you're welcome. By gum, beats all how hungry I'm getting.

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EZRA
I dread the day I have to lose Louisa. I dare say she'll be catching a beau before long.

HANK
That's the advice I've been giving her for the past sixteen years.

LOUISA
No such thing! Sixteen years ago I was just getting out of short dresses.

HUBE
(SITS OVER L.) Gosh you must have waited a long time before you got out of short dresses ha w haw haw.

LOUISA
Rube Hawkins, you shut up.

RUBE
I'm shut! (PUTS HAND OVER MOUTH)

HANK
Hello, Rube Hawkins.

RUBE
Hello, Hank Stump, what you doing around here?

HANK
Huh, that's my business.

RUBE
Huh, you ain't got no business, but I know what you're doing around here. You're still sparkling Miss Wiggins. (LAUGHS) It beats all how old rooster like old hens haw haw haw!

HANK LOUISA
Rube Hawkins, I'll bust your head. (THROWS POTATO AT HIM)

RUBE
(DODGES) Jes' missed me, Haw haw haw! (LAUGHS)

EZRA
Now, Rube, you hush your noise.

RUBE
Cain't be done, Mr. Tompkins; I was born that way.

EZRA
Say, Hank, when you thinking about getting married?

HANK
Can't say, Ezra, but I know somebody who would make me a mighty fine wife. (LOOKING AT LOUISA)

LOUISA
(SHYLY) I suppose you're hinting about me?

HANK
By gum that's just exactly what I am. (QUICKLY X TO HER AND SITS BY BENCH BESIDE HER, SITS DOWN IN PAN OF WATER. JUMPS UP QUICKLY) Oh oh oh I sat right down in a pan of water. (LOUISA REMOVES PAN)

RUBE

(LAUGHS) Oh oh oh gosh this is the most fun I've had since our dog Fido, was a pup haw haw haw. (EXITS IN BARN L. 3rd LAUGHING)

EDWARD TOMPKINS

(ENTERS L. U. COMES THRU GATE C.) Hello, Mr. Stump.

HANK

Hello, Edward, hot day aint it?

EDWARD

Yep. (X TO WELL AND GETS DRINK OF WATER)

EZRA

(STILL MENDING HARNESS) Well, son, you finally got back, eh?

EDWARD

Yep.

EZRA

How's Mr. Leonard's folks?

EDWARD

Oh they're all well.

LOUISA

How's Elsie? (SMILES AT HIM)

EDWARD

Oh, she's all right. Thank you.

EZRA

Did you see her today?

EDWARD

Yep.

EZRA

(SMILES) Talk with her?

EDWARD

(SMILES) Yep.

EZRA

"yep" Oh, you needn't be bashful or ashamed of it, my son, it's only natural that you should wish to spend all the time you can with the girl who is going to be your wife.

EDWARD

Oh, tha t's not settled yet, father. Besides Elsie may prefer some other feller for a husband.

EZRA

Nonsense, my boy, she's only waiting--yes only waiting for you to ask her. (QUARTETTE SINGS OFF STAGE)

EDWARD

I don't know about that, father.

EZRA

(LISTENS TO SONG) Why what's the, Edward?

EDWARD
That's the berry pickers singing.

EZRA
Sounds pretty good, don't it?

EDWARD
Yes, father.

DORA DEAN
(ENTERS L. U. COMES THRU GATE SHE WEARS SHIRT WAIST. BLACK AND WHITE CHECK LINIMENT SKIRT BLACK HAT. BLACK SHAWL. CARRIES SUIT CASE. HER AGE IS ABOUT TWENTY TWO OR THREE. SHE COMES THRU THE POST, LEANS ON GATE. SHE APPEARS VERY TIRED) Pardon me, but is this where Mr. Tompkins lives?

EZRA
(RISES) Why yes, that's my name. Who be ye?

DORA
My name is Dora Dean.

EZRA
Dean-Dean? I don't know any one by that name around here. What can I do for you, Miss?

DORA
Oh, if you please, sir, I--I thought that perhaps, that--(STAGGERS)

LOUISA
(QUICKLY X TO HER, AND SUPPORT HER) Why the poor girl is ill. Sit right down here. (HELPS HER TO BENCH IN FRONT OF WALL)

HANK
Yes, sit right down it won't cost you a cent, and if its a constable ye need, by gum I'm at your service for any old time there's anything going on I've got my eyes on it.

DORA
(FAINT) Water! A drink of water please.

LOUISA
Water--why of course. (EDWARD HELPS TO GIVE HER WATER)

HANK
Certainly. Ye can have all the water ye want, and it won't cost yea cent either.

EZRA
Perhaps some of your Long Life Bitters would be good for her, Hank.

HANK
(CLASPS HAND ON POCKET) Not by a durn sight. Them bitters aint for winnen folks. I have to keep it on hand der my rheumatix. (TAKES BOTTLE FROM POCKET AND DRINKS AND THEN PUTS BOTTLE BACK IN POCKET)

DORA
(AFTER DRINKING WATER) Oh thank you. I am sorry to put you to so much trouble.

LOUISA
Taint no trouble.

EZRA
What was it you was going to say to me, Miss?

DORA

The fact, sir, I am looking for work, and I thought I might find something to do here.

EZRA

Work? Why you don't look strong enough to do much work, I'm afraid you couldn't earn your salt.

LOUISA

Why no. You aint fit to stand up, let alone work.

DORA

Oh indeed I am. I'll work in the house or out in the fields---only give me a chance, and you'll not repent it.

EZRA

We aint got much of anything for you to do, I reckon you'd better go back to your home where ever that is.

DORA

Oh, sir, I have no home. I'm all alone and friendless.

EZRA

What, aint got no home? Well, it seems kinder queer to me that any body should be without a home and no friends.

DORA

That's because you have both, sir. My mother died a few months ago. My father has been dead for years. The little means we had went to pay the expense of my mother's illness; that is how we lost our home. Then I too was very ill, but then I'm ever so much better now. I left the place where I have known so much sorrow and came here for work. No one in the village would employ me because I was a stranger. So I came out into the country. It seemed to me that out there where people live under the beautiful sky and trees, and flowers about them there must be some kind hearts who would take pity on me, and give me a chance to earn my bread.

EZRA

My poor girl, I feel sorry for you, of course. But I'm afraid I can't do much for you. But you can stay and rest awhile and have some dinner with us. Then Edward or Rube can hitch up and drive you over to the place provided for cases like yours, where you can get food and shelter.

DORA.

You mean the poor house? Oh, sir, I did not ask for charity. If some one will only give me a chance to earn my living. (HALF CRYING) I can starve. (PICKS UP SUIT CASE STARTS TO GO)

EDWARD

Wait a minute. Father, can't you do something for this poor girl? There is considerable work around the house. She could help Cousin Louis a ~~hand~~ a lot.

EZRA

(CLARS AT EDWARD) Now stop right there, this young woman is entire stranger to me. I don't know nothing about her character. We are respectable people. We are well thought of, and I aint going to take

a strange young woman into my house without knowing who she is. 11

EDWARD

But, father--

EZRA

Not another word! My son, there can't be two ways in this house while I'm in it.

HANK

Remember, Ezra, you're a Christian man. Now aint it written some where in the bible something like this--"in as much as ye have done until the least of those ye have done it unto me."? (DORA AGAIN STARTS TOWARD GATE)

EZRA

(QUICKLY) Wait! Hold on a minute. I always want to do what is right. (TURNS TO DORA) They seem to think that if I turn you from my door I won't be going according to the scriptures and no one aint going to be able to say that about Ezra Tompkins. You can stay. (EVERYBODY IS PLEASED)

DORA

Oh, thank you, sir. I thought there must be some kind hearts in the world who wo ld feel for me, and I thank you. (TURNING TO EDWARD AND LOUISA) And you and you, and you. (BOWS HEAD)

HANK

(GETS EXCITED) By gum she's got pretty eyes. (ASIDE) My I wish I was a young feller. I'd nail on to her. (TURNS TO HER) That's all right, Mi Miss, don't thank me, but let your future conduct prove that Mr. Tompkins was right and we was wrong--no no I mean that we were wrong and you was right, I mean that wrong is wrong and right is right. All right is right all right all right--I mean--excuse me I don't know what I mean--but I guess you know what I mean.

DORA

Oh yes, sir, I understand, and you will see that I am not ungrateful a nd I shall endeavor to prove what these kind hearted people will never have cause to regret their kindness to me.

EZRA

I hope not. (TURNS ASIDE) But something seems to tell me that I'm making a mistake, that I'll yet be sorry. I took this girl into my house. (X UP C. AND LEANS ON FENCE)

LOUISA

What did you say your name is?

DORA

Dora Dean.

LOUISA

Dora Dean; that's a pretty name.

HANK

Yes, and by gum she's a pretty girl.

LOUISA

(CLAPS AT HIM, THEN TURNS TO DORA) Well, Dora, (SMILES AT HER) you might jes' come right in the house, get your things off and I'll find a light job for you, so you can start in at once, 0

you do all kinds of house-work?

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DORA

Well, I can try, and what I don't know, you can teach me.

LOUISA

Well, now that's sensible talk any how. Edward, you bring her suit case in the house. (EXIT IN HOUSE WITH DORA)

EDWARD

All right I will. (GRABS SUIT CASE AND EXITS IN HOUSE)

HANK

(LOOKING AFTER DORA) By gum she's a peach. (DRINKS OUT OF BOTTLE)

HARVEY BARTON

(HEARD OFF L. U.) Whoa, Dandy, whoa! Hello there.

ZERA

(CALLS OFF L. TO HIM) Why hello there, Mr. Barton. Come on in.

HARVEY

I will if you'll send some one out here to hold my horse.

ZERA

(CALLS) Rube, oh Rube.

RUBE

(IN BARN) What do you want?

ZERA

Come here.

RUBE

I can't come now.

ZERA

Why not?

RUBE

I've caught that old speckled hen by the throat, and I'm making her lay eggs. She's laid one egg and I'm going to choke another out of her.

ZERA

The durn fool! Thinks he can make hens lay eggs by choking them!

(CALLS TO ED IN HOUSE) Edward, Oh, Edward.

EDWARD

(IN HOUSE) Coming. (APPEARS IN DOOR WAY) What is it, father?

ZERA

Mr. Barton just drove up and he'd like to have somebody to hold his horse.

EDWARD

All right, I'll do it. (EXITS THRU GATE OFF L. U.) Hello, Mr. Barton.

HARVEY

Hello, Ed. (ENTERS FROM L U THRU GATE) How do you do Mr. Tompkins. (X DOWN OVER L.)

How are you, Mr. Barton.

HARVEY

I thought I'd come over and have a look at that prize heifer of yours and if she suits me, and we can agree on a price I'll take her.

EZRA

All right, Mr. Barton, better have your horse put up and have a bit of dinner with us. Edward will take you down to the pasture and show you the heifer. (CALLS OFF L.) Oh, Edward, say put Mr. Barton's horse in the barn and give him a small measure of oats.

EDWARD

(CALLS BACK) All right.

EZRA

Well, Mr. Barton, you are buying up a lot of stock, building a new house. Kinder looks as if you was going to get married. (DIGS HIM IN THE RIBS)

HARVEY

(SMILES) I wouldn't be a bit surprised, and I don't mind telling you I've got the lady all picked out.

EZRA

That's good.

RUBE

(ENTERS L. 3RD.) Cosh I got 'em. (HAS HAT IN HIS HAND) I knew I could choke two eggs out of that old speckled hen, now I'll take 'em in the house and let the other old hen--Miss Wiggins, cook 'em for my dinner.. (X OVER R. EZRA KICKS AT HIM) Hey, jess missed me. haw haw, haw. (EXITS IN HOUSE)

HARVEY

Yes, I've finally made up my mind I've had enough city life so I'm going to settle down on the farm.

EZRA

Well, you've got one of the best farms in this county.

HARVEY

(RUBE ENTERS)

Yes, and I'm going to make the people around here set up and take notice. (RUBE ENTERS AND STANDS IN DOOR WAY) I'm going to show them what real life is. I'm going to get a mate for my horse Dandy, and drive a Tandem.

EZRA

Tandem! What's that?

HARVEY: RUBE

(REDUD LAUGH) Haw haw haw why Mr. Tompkins, don't you know what a tandem is. Why it's a new fangled kind of a team.

HARVEY

Well, not exactly a team. (IS OVER L.)

RUBE

Yes it is too. (X UP C.) Only when you drive a team you drives this way (SHOWS HOW TEAMSTER DOES) and when you drive a tandem you do it this

way. (PUTS THUMB SINGERS SPREAD OUT THUMB OF EACH OTHER HAND TO LITTLE FINGER HUMPS EACH IT HIM THEN LAUGHS) Haw haw haw.

EZRA

(HIS BEEN WATCHING HIM DEEPLY INTERESTED, KICKS AT HIM) You--you--

RUBE

(DODGES) You--you jes' missed me. Haw, haw, haw. (EXITS L. 3RD.)

EZRA

That boy is the durnedest fool I ever saw.

HARVEY

Well, he is about right in his idea of driving a tandem but I never heard it explained that way before. A tandem is one horse befor the other. (SHOWS WITH HANDS)

EZRA

Oh single file, eh?

HARVEY

Yes. (LOOKS OVER R.) Why hello, Hank Stump.

HANK

Hello. I was just wondering if ya was going to recognize the law. (RUBS COAT SLEEVE OVER HIS BADGE)

HARVEY

(SMILES) Did you hear about the post-office robbery?

HANK

(INDIGNANTLY) Did I hear about it? I say I did, I was right on the scene jes' a few hours after the robbery was committed.

HARVEY

But you didn't get the robbers though did you?

HANK

No, but I've got my eye on 'em.

EZRA

Well, I think I'll step in the barn and have a drink of sweet cider. Will you join me, Barton?

HARVEY

No, thanks; I have lots of it over at my place.

EZRA

Yes, I s'pose so, I sp'poso so. (EXITS IN BARN L. 3RD.)

HANK

So you're thinking about getting married, eh?

HARVEY

Oh yes.

HANK

Huh. Going to marry a citygal I reckon?

HARVEY

No, I'm going to marry one of our country girls, right here in this

this neighborhood. She's quite well to do, got lots of property.

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HANK

Huh, I don't know who that could be unless you mean Elsie Leonard.

HARVEY

Well, maybe she's to be the lucky lady who is to become Mrs. Harvey Barton.

HANK

And do you think it is right for you to bust in there?

HARVEY

What do you mean?

HANK

I mean that she is engaged to marry Ed Tompkins.

HARVEY

(GRINS) Oh, well, I guess I won't have much trouble in breaking that up. She'd rather have me than that country boob. You see in a case like this, it's each man for himself. I aint that girl for my wife and I'm going to have her.

HANK

Maybe so.

ERZA

(ENTERS FROM L. 3RD WITH ED) Well, now, Mr. Barton, Edward will take you down to the pasture and show you the heiffer and by the time you get back dinner will be ready.

HARVEY

Very well, Mr. Tompkins.

EDWARD

Come on, Mr. Barton. (EXITS THRU GATE OFF TO R. U. WITH BARTON)

LOUISA

(ENTERS FROM HOUSE) Who was that, Ezra?

ERZA

Mr. Barton. He came over to buy the heiffer and by the way, Louisa, I invited him to stay to dinner with us.

LOUISA

Well, I'll fix a place for him at the table, but to tell the truth, I haven't got much use for that man.

ERZA

Oh well, Louisa, there's worse fellows than him.

HANK

Yes, but they're in jail, and that's where he'll land if he aint careful. I've got my eye on him.

LOUISA

Well, it certainly seems to me that Harvey Barton is putting on a lot of airs since he's all heir to all that property.

Young man you do that again and I'll place you under arrest. (TURNS AND EXITS IN HOUSE ANGRY)

RUBE

Get out. You couldn't arrest a flea. Haw, haw, haw.

LOUISA

(STANDS, GLARING AT HIM) Well, if he can't, I can. (RUSH AT HIM. BUS. OF RUNNING AROUND STAGE DORA ENTERS FROM HOUSE WITH PAN OF POTATOES CROSSING TO WELL AND AS THEY CHASE AROUND STAGE ABOUT SECOND TIME AROUND RUBE BUMPS INTO DORA AT WELL, AND SPILLS POTATOES ON THE GROUND)

RUBE

Now look what you went and done. You made me spill the beans--I mean the potatoes. (LAUGHS)

LOUISA

(ANGRY) Rube Hawkins, if ever I get my hands on you again, I'll wring your neck.

RUBE

Excuse me, Miss, I didn't mean to butt into you, honest I didn't. I'll help you pick 'em up. (HELPS HER PICK UP POTATOES) I hope you will like it here 'cause--'cause I like you. (GETTING EXCITED) No, no I mean we all like you.

DORA

I'm glad of that. I want them to like me. (PICKING UP POTATOES)

RUBE

And do you want me to like you? (THEY ARE BOTH ON KNEES FACING EACH OTHER)

DORA

Why, certainly.

RUBE

(STOPS AND LOOKS RIGHT STRAIGHT AT HER) Gosh, I could--I could jess' love you.

DORA

(STARTLED) What?

RUBE

I mean--let's pick up these potatoes. (BUS. THROWS POTATOES IN PAN WIPE FOREHEAD WITH HANKIE? THROWS HANKIE IN PAN, PUTS MORE POTATOES IN PAN, GETS MORE EXCITED AND TAKES UP A POTATO AND WIPE FOREHEAD WITH IT, PUTS POTATO IN HIS POCKET INSTEAD OF HIS HANKIE ETC.)

DORA

Here's your hankie. (HANDS IT TO HIM. THEY RISE)

RUBE

Thanks, gosh. I put that in the pan for potatoes didn't I? (LAUGHS) You must excuse me. I get all excited some times. (LAUGHS)

DORA

Oh, that's all right. (POURS WATER IN PAN AT WELL. THEN EXITS HOUSE)

RUBE

See but she's a peach. She got me all fussed up. Gosh but it's hot. But I'd be willing to go through fire and brimstone for that gal.

DORA

(RE-ENTERS FROM HOUSE WITH BUCKET AND X TO WALL TO GET WATER) Dinner is about ready.

RUBE

All right. Want some water? I'll carry it for you.

DORA

No thank you. I'd much rather do it myself. You go in the house and get ready for dinner. (LOUISA APPEARS IN DOOR WAY AND MATCHES)

RUBE

All right. (GOING TOWARDS HOUSE, LOOKING BACK AT DORA HE DOESN'T SEE LOUISA) I'd just as leave to do it for you though. (ASIDE) Gosh, but she's nice. (THROWS KISS AT BACK OF HER HEAD. DORA DOES NOT SEE THE MOVEMENT BUT LOUISA DOES)

LOUISA

(AS SHE LEAVES THE HOUSE) Rube Hawkins, you--(SLAPS AT HIM)

RUBE

(DUCKS AWAY) You jess' missed me.

LOUISA

(GRABS HIM AND SLAPS HIM) No I didn't. I got you that time.

RUBE

(HOLDS HAND TO FACE) Gosh I'll say you did.

LOUISA

(GRABS HIM BY THE EAR) Get in there, and get washed up for dinner. (EXITS IN HOUSE WITH HIM)

DORA

(AT WALL) At last I have found refuge, a home and friends, and a new life before me. And the memory of those dark days will leave it's imprint on my heart in spite of all, but then time and work--yes time and work surely it will bring forgetfulness and cure for every pang that hearts can suffer.

HARVEY

(INTERS R. U. CALLS BACK TO ED) All right, Edward, I'll tell them you are coming. (INTERS THRU GATE MEETS DORA C.)

DORA

(SEES HIM AS SHE LIFTS BAIL DOWN. DROPS BAIL) My god! Harvey Judson!

HARVEY

Shhhh hush. I'm not known here by that name. My real name is Harvey Barton. Be careful what you do or say here. But what are you doing here?

DORA

I--I came here for work. I am obliged to do something by which I can live. I've got no other resource.

I don't believe you. You have followed me here to make trouble for me.

DORA

Oh no no no. Chance brought me to this place. I did not even know you were this side of the globe.

HARVEY

So you are working here, eh? Poverty stricken I suppose? Well, it's your own fault. I offered you money to keep you ~~lest~~ still you were well and strong again, but you and your mother indignantly refused it.

DORA

All I asked--all that I wanted was that I might never see your face again.

HARVEY

Well, you can't stay here. You must leave this place at once.

DORA

I refuse to go. I've had too much trouble in finding such a place as this to leave it now.

HARVEY

But confound it, Dora, don't you see that it won't do for you to live in this neighborhood where I live?

LOUISA

(IN HOUSE, CALLS) Dora, tell Edward and Mr. Barton to come to dinner.

DORA

(CALLS OFF TO HER) Very well, Miss Wiggins.

HARVEY

Be careful now. I will see you again, and in the mean time, you must act as if you'd never seen me before--I will do the same. But remember you've got to go.

DORA

(PLAIDINGLY) Oh, have I not suffered enough? Can't you let me remain here and earn an honest living? Can't you let me stay with those kind hearted people where peace and contentment will come to my heart.

HARVEY

(FIRMLY) No, I say no. You've got to leave this place, and that's all there is to it; (EXITS IN HOUSE)

DORA

Oh, and I thought the past was buried in oblivion. (SINKS DOWN ON BENCH BY WALL) Oh can I never get away from that man? Must the shadow of the old life rest upon me forever? (SOBBING)

EDWARD

(ENTERS FROM R. U. COMES THRU GATE) Why Miss Dean, what's the matter? You are ill? I'll call Cousin Louisa. (STARTS TO HOUSE)

DORA

(RISE QUICKLY) Oh no no Mr. Edward. I--I'm quite well--just for a moment the heat--oh, your father was right --I'm not fit for work. I must go away.

EDWARD
Why you've just come. Besides you say you have no home; where would you go?

DORA
I--I don't know. To some hospital perhaps.

EDWARD
Oh, you mustn't think of such a thing. Stay here with us, the fresh country air and the flowers and things will make you well and strong again. We'll see that the work is not too hard for you.

DORA
No, Mr. Edward. You are very kind, but you do not understand--I--couldn't face--this I could stand the strain. I must go.

EDWARD
But there is no need for such haste. Wait a few days then perhaps you will think better of it. We'll do all we can to make you feel that you have found a home and friends. Come, what do you say?

DORA
(TURNS AWAY AND SOBS)

RUBE
(APPEARS IN DOOR WAY) "He who hesitates is lost" And if you folks don't come right away, you'll lose your dinner. (EXITS IN HOUSE)

DORA
(REPEATS) "He who hesitates is lost."

EDWARD
(PLEADINGLY) Won't you say yes that you will stay?

DORA
(STANDS AND LISTENS. THEN SPEAKS QUICKLY) Yes. (SONG IS SUNG OFF STAGE)
DORA RACHES AND PICKS UP BAIL OF WATER. EDWARD TAKES HOLD OF BAIL WITH HER HAND AND THEY EXIT IN THE HOUSE AS THE CURTAIN COMES DOWN SLOWLY AS THE SONG DIES AWAY IN THE DISTANCE)

(CURTAIN)

(END OF ACT ONE)

SCENE: The interior of Ezra's home. Winter time.

RUBE

(ENTERS AFTER RISE D.R.) Hello, Miss ~~modest~~ DORA

~~modest~~ DORA

(WHO IS DISCOVERED AT RISE SITTING L. OF TABLE SEWING ON FANCY WORK)
Hello, Rube. (BOTH SEEM TO BE IN CHEERFUL MOODS, ESPECIALLY RUBE)

RUBE

(LOOKING AT HER) Gosh, you're all fixed up aint you?

~~modest~~ DORA

Oh a little. How do I look, Rube? (RISES AND TURNS AROUND)

RUBE

Oh jes' scrumptious. I slicked up a bit myself. (TURNS AROUND AND SHOWS HER) Got on my Sunday go to meeting clothes so I could come in the parlor and read awhile. Where's my book? Did you see anything of it?

~~modest~~ DORA

Which one, Rube? (SITS DOWN AGAIN)

RUBE

Theneone you gave me for Christmas, "Pickings from Puck". Gosh it's the funniest book I ever saw. Oh here it is. (SITS R. OF TABLE) Say, Miss Dora, do you know I thin you're an awful nice girl?

DORA

(SMILES) Do you, Rube?

RUBE

Yep! Nice enough to hugh(LAUGHS)

DORA

Now, Rube, you mustn't say such things to me.

RUBE

Well, I can't help it for thinking that way, can I? Besides I aint the only one that thinks that way. All the fellows over at the village are just crazy about you. And that aint all, there's a fellow in this house that is head over heels in love with you.

DORA

Why, Rube, who do you mean?

RUBE

I mean Ed Tompkins, be gosh.

DORA

Ah, Rube, you just imagine that.

RUBE

Now I don't nuther. Say, Miss Dora, I s'pose maybe some of these days you'll get getting married to Edward.

DORA

Why, certainly not, Rube, that,

that's impossible.

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RUBE

Why impossible?

DORA

Well, for one thing Edward is engaged to marry Elsie Leonard.

RUBE

Gosh, that's so.

DORA

Besides I don't expect to ever marry any man.

RUBE

Gosh, that lets me out too. But then I don't suppose you could give me any hope, could you?

DORA

What do you mean, Rube?

RUBE

I mean you would give me hope if you could, wouldn't you? But of course you can't unless you can, can you?

DORA

(SMILES) now, Rube, you must not talk to me in this manner any more.

RUBE

All right, Miss Dora. No harm done, is there?

DORA

No, not a bit.

RUBE

Then I'm going to read some jokes. (OPENS BOOK) Gosh this is the funniest book I ever saw. (LAUGHS) Here's some classified adds. (READS) "Wanted a hustler to run a Chinese laundry out of town." Maybe they're bottleggers. (READS) "Wanted furnished rooms for man and wife with folding doors between them. (SPEAKS) Gosh I wouldn't want nothing like that between me and my wife. (LAUGHS. READS) "Wanted a hotel porters room furnished also chambermaid. (JUMPS UP) Gosh, that's the kind of a job, I'd like ha haw haw haw. (X OVER R.)

EZRA

(ENTERS FROM DOWN STAIRS AT R. U. DRESSED IN GRAY TROUSERS, ENGLISH WALKING COAT, COLLAR AND TIE ON ETC.) Now, Rube, what's the matter with you?

RUBE

Say, Mr. Tompkins, I'm going to quit my job with you.

EZRA

(SURPRISED) Going to quit? What for? (COMES C.)

RUBE

'Cause I'm going to Boston and get me a job that'll just suit me.

EZRA

What kind of a job?

RUBE

Here it is. (SHOWS BOOK TO HIM) "Hotel porter wanted, rooms furnished also chambermaid. That's me. I'm going to have a touch of high life. (LAUGHS LOUDLY)

ZERA

(PUTS ON GLASSES AND LOOKS AT THE BOOK) Why you durn fool that means they want a hotel porter and also a chambermaid, and that they'll furnish each of them a room.

RUBE

Aw shucks is that what it means? (TAKES BOOK AND LOOKS AT IT) Well, why in the thunder don't they say what they mean? (DISGUSTED)

DORA

Are you going to the party tonight, Mr. Tompkins?

ZERA

Yes, I reckon Louisa and Edward and I will go. Louisa and I won't stay long though. All the old folks will remain for supper only. After which the young folks will have a dancing party, play games, and such like. How do I look, Dora?

DORA

Oh you look just grand.

ZERA

You see I got that new tie on that you gave me for Christmas. I'm not taking a back seat for anybody at Leonard's surprise party tonight.

RUBE

Say, Mr. Tompkins, why don't you be in first class style and wear a high collar?

ZERA

Not me. I can hold my head up without wearing one of them choking collars like some wall eyed dude.

RUBE

Well, you've got to be in style to look right.

ZERA

Well, I'm satisfied to look like a human being and not like a shank high rooster with his tail feathers out.

RUBE

Well, now you look mighty fine. How do you feel?

ZERA

I feel perfectly all right, except for my corns. (LOOKS DOWN AT FEET) They are hurting me considerable of late.

RUBE

Why don't you get some corn salve?

ZERA

I've tried most every thing going. If my corns get much worse, I don't know how I am going to be able to walk on my feet.

RUBE

Why don't you learn to walk on your hands? Haw haw haw.

EZRA
Huh, when I was over town the other day, I stopped at Rummel's store. We got to talking about corns on the feet, and there was one of them travelling salesmen in there, and he said that corn cakes was good for corns on the feet, so I bought a nikles worth of corn cakes and eat every one of them, but they didn't do my corns a gosh durn bit of good.

DORA

That's a good one! Haw, haw haw. (SITS ON SOFA AND READS BOOK R.)

EZRA

(UP LOOKING OUT WINDOW) It's starting to snow again, and the wind is coming up. Looks like its going to be an awful bad night. Dora is my pipe and tobacco on the mantel there?

DORA

Yes, Mr. Tompkins..(GIVES THEM FOR HIM)

EZRA

I believe I'll have a smoke while Louisa is getting ready to go to the party. (X TO R. OF TABLE AND SITS. DORA FILLS HIS PIPE AND HOLDS MATCH FOR HIM)

DORA

Here's your pipe, Mr. Tompkins.

EZRA

(PUFFS ON PIPE UNTIL IT IS WELL LIGHTED) Thank you, Dora. You're a good girl. Dora, let me see how long have you been here now?

DORA

About six months, Mr. Tompkins.

EZRA

Uh huh. Well, I don't see no reason why you shouldn't always make this your home as long as you conduct yourself as you've been doing. We are glad to have you here.

DORA

Thank you. I should love to stay always.

EZRA

Then just consider this your home from now on. (PUFFS ON PIPE) You mustn't think hard of me on account of the way I spoke to you when you first come here--

DORA

Why of course not. (SITS L. OF TABLE)

EZRA

I didn't know anything about your character then. (SHE STARTS) To my way of thinking there's only one way to live, and that's according to the scriptures--a strict abiding by the ten commandments. When you first came here that day last summer I couldn't see my way clear to taking a strange young woman into my house that mayoe had strayed from the straight path that's marked out for her.

DORA

(STARTS. RISES. TURNS UP SLEEVES, HIGHLIGHTS TO HER EYES. FINALLY RECOVERS HERSELF. TURNS TO HIM) But, Mr. Tompkins, suppose--just

just suppose I had been one of those unfortunates who had offended against one of those laws, one who suffered and was not guilty of an intentional wrong, one who was more sinned against than sinning--- only suppose such a case, would you still think as you do.

EZRA

Why of course. If a law is broke, it's broke aint it? If a wrong is done it's done aint it?

DORA

(STARTLED) Yes, yes, that's true.

EZRA

Nothing can alter that.

DORA

(THINKING) No, nothing can alter that.

EZRA

But there aint no need to say anything more about it. I can't see that it concerns you in any way, and you are welcome to make this your home as long as you want to stay.

DORA

Thank you, Mr. Tompkins, I will remain until you tell me to.

EZRA

Then its all understand that this is to be your home. Say, Dora, I wish you'd see if Louisa has started to get ready. We'd better be going in a few minutes.

DORA

Very well, Mr. Tompkins. I'll help her to get ready. (EXITS R. U. UPSTAIRS)

EZRA

(PUFFS PIPE) A good girl that. Yes, a good girl. (LOOKS AT RUBE AND SEES THAT HE IS DEVOURING HIS BOOK) I say a good girl that.

RUBE

(LOOKS UP, STARTLED) Eh? Oh yes, yes. (READS BOOK)

EZRA

(X UP TO WINDOW LOOKS OUT) Yes, this is going to be a stormy night. Hello, there's some one coming down the road. Why it's Hank Stump. plowing through the snow on foot. (LAUGHS) Huh, he looks like an old worn out rooster, yes he's coming here, he's turning in at the gate. Say, Rube, you'd better go and open the outside door for him.

RUBE

(RISES, DISGUSTED) Oh, all right. (EXITS L. U.)

EZRA

(X AND SITS R. OF SAGE) Huh, I wonder if Hank has got his eye on them burglars yet? I reckon he could see a hole lot better if he'd leave them long life bitters alone. (PICKS UP NEWSPAPER PUTS ON GLASSES AND STARTS TO READ)

RUBE

(ENTERS L. U.) Say, Mr. Tompkins, Hank stump wants to know if you are at home?

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EZRA
Wants to know if I'm at home? Why of course, you durn fool.

RUBE
(TURNS TOWARDS L U AND CALLS TO HANK) Of course, you durn fool, come on in.

HANK STUMP
(ENTERS L. U.) Young feller, don't you call me a fool, or I'll have you up before the judge. I'll learn you to respect the law. (MOVES OVER COAT AND MUFFLER. HANGS THEM ON HALL TREE)

RUBE
(LAUGHS) Where is the law, Hank?

HANK
(RUBS HIS BADGE WITH COAT SLEEVES C. RUBE IS R.) Right here.

EZRA
Hello, Hank.

HANK
How do, Ezra, where's Louisa?

EZRA
Oh she's around some place.

HANK RUBE
Say, Hank, did you come over to see Louisa Wiggins? (GRINS)

HANK
That's my business.

RUBE
You get out. You aint got no business. (X TO R. C. AND CALLS UP STAIRS) Say, Miss Wiggins. Oh, Miss Wiggins your be a is here. You'd better hurry 'cause he wants to spark now. Haw, haw, haw. (LAUGHS LOUDLY)

HANK
You young scamp! (SLAPS AT HIM)

RUBE
(DODGES AWAY) Hess missed me.

HANK
Oh, oh! (FLEES HIS LEG)

RUBE
What's the matter? Hurt your rheumatix. (LAUGHS)

HANK
Oh, my rheumaticky leg. (TAKES BOTTLE FROM POCKET AND DRINKS)

RUBE
(GRINS) That'll fix it all right.

HANK
I dest couldn't get along without my Long Life Bitters.

RUBE
I'll bet that stuff is better than hard cider. Say give me a pull of that. (RAUNCHES FOR IT)

HANK
No, sir. (PUTS BOTTLE IN POCKET) That's for men as needs it, and not for a young fresh mutt like you.

RUBE

Well, I'd rather be a young fresh mutt, than a dried up old prusa like you. (LAUGHS)

HANK

Blast your hide. (STRIKES AT HIM WITH CANE)

RUBE

(RUNS TO D. R. 2ND) Jes' missed me. Haw, haw, haw. (EXITS R. 2ND)

ERZA

Consarn that boy; his brain runs to foolishness.

HANK

His brains? Huh he aint got no brains. (X OVER DOWN R.)

ERZA

Reckon you're right. Going over to the surprise party tonight, Hank?

HANK

Well, yes. I thought I'd stop in and see if you wouldn't take me along in your big sleigh.

ERZA

I reckon so, Hank; the sleigh just holds four.

HANK

Thanks, Ezra, it would be too much for me to walk over there with my rheumatically leg, especially when the snow is drifting all the time. (THIS TIME OF THE PLAY IS EARLY EVENING)

ERZA

Yes, there's another hard snow storm setting in.

LOUISA

(ENTERS FROM RU. DOWN STAIRS) How do you do, Mr. Stump.

HANK

Mr. Stumpy You most always call me Hank, but now that you're all decked out like a circus horse you put on airs, uh huh!

ERZA

What's the matter, Hank---is she freezing up to you?

HANK

Seems that way, but never you mind---whenever we get hitched up I'll take some of that frost out of her.

LOUISA

(FIRMLY) Hank Stump, you hadn't better go to counting your chickens before they're hatched

HANK

Now, Louisa, you know I'd make a good husband for you, besides you couldn't do better.

LOUISA
Indeed. I couldn't do worse, you mean.

HANK
Well, you can't get rid of me any how. I'm going to keep asking you until you say yes. My heart is set on it. I've got my eye on you.

EERA
Hank, is going to ride over to party with us, lousia.

LOUISA
Indeed? (GLARES AT HANK)

HANK
Yes, you see my hoss has gone lame.

LOUISA
He aint no lamer than you be, I guess. Why don't you give him some of your Long Life Bitters?

HANK
They aint hoss bitters. I've got some linement for him.

LOUISA
Huh, you'd better rub some of it on yourself. You ought to be home in bed nussin your rheumatix. instead of going out tonight frolics.

HANK
Not by a darn sight. By gum I aint missed a surprise party in thirty years, and I aint a going to begin now.

EERA
Lover's quarrels is a sure sign of marriage.

LOUISA
Huh, if I wanted an excuse to get married, it wouldn't be a lame excuse.

HANK
Is that so? By gum you look mighty fine, Louisa. Why you look young and prettier than ever tonight.

LOUISA
(SOFTENS, AND SMILES) Oh do you think so, Hank?

HANK
You certainly do and I can't help but keep my eye on you.

LOUISA
Oh, Hank, I'm glad you like the way I look. (SMILES AT HIM)

HANK
Why you look a tunning. (SMILES AT HER) Say you haven't got an extra piece of pie layin' around the house, have ye?

LOUISA
Why of course I have, Hank, come right into the kitchen and get it. Hank. (EXIT D. R. 2ND)

HANK
Say, Hank, have you caught them burglars yet?

HANK
Nope, but I've got my eye on them. (EXITS DOOR HIGH T SECOND)

EDWARD

(ENTERS L. U.) Say, Father.

EZRA

Well, son?

EDWARD

Who all is going to ride to the party with us in the big sleigh?

EZRA

Well, there is Cousin Louisa, you, and myself--and Hank Stump is going to ride over with us. That's all the sleigh will hold. Dora and Rube will remain here and take care of the house. Was you over to Leonard's this afternoon, Edward?

EDWARD

Yes, father.

EZRA

How's Elsie? How are you getting along with your spanking.

EDWARD

Why I--I hadn't thought much about that lately.

EZRA

Well, it's time you were thinking about it, son. Elsie's father and me are agreed on the marriage. Why for years it's been our greatest desire that you two youngsters should marry. Besides the two farms adjoining as they do would make the prettiest piece of property in the state. So go ahead and ask Elsie to marry you, my son; you both have my blessing. (RISSES)

EDWARD

Why, father, there's plenty of time to think of that.

EZRA

No there aint. Now if you don't quit this shilly shally business some other fellow will step in and carry her off before your very eyes.

EDWARD

But, Father, maybe Elsie don't really care to marry me.

EZRA

Why of course she wants to marry you. And tonight at the party would be just the time and the place to ask her. (POKES HIM IN THE RIBS) Remember, my son, the sooner the better. (X TO STAIRS TURNS AND SMILES) The sooner the better. (EXITS UPSTAIRS AT R. U.)

DORA

(MEETS EZRA ON THE STAIRS AS SHE ENTERS FROM R. U.) Why, Edward, is that you?

EDWARD

(IS OVER L. HI TURNS) Why hello, Dora. You'd better be getting ready for the party. Dora, the big sleigh only holds four, and Hank is going with the folks, so I'll drive you over to Leonard's in the cutter if you like. Will you be ready soon?

DORA
Well, I--I'm not going.

EDWARD
(SURPRISED) Not going--why?

DORA
Well, I---I mustn't go--that is, I wasn't invited--and I didn't expect to be. You see, I am your father's servant, and the people don as a rule entertain the servants with the masters.

EDWARD
But how will you spend the evening?

DORA
Oh, I shan't be lonesome. Rube will be here to keep me company. I shall be all right, never fear, though it is very kind of you to think of me. (X OVER L.)

EDWARD
(STANDS LOOKS AT HER A SECOND, THEN PULLS HIS CAP ON QUICKLY TURNS AND EXITS AT L. U. WITH OUT A WORD)

EZRA
(ENTERS WITH RUBE)

RUBE
(ENTERS FROM DOOR R. WITH CAP AND MITTENS ON. EZRA FOLLOWS HIM WITH FUR CAP, MITTS AND OVER COAT ON HIS ARM) Want me to go hitch up, Mr. Tompkins.

EZRA
Yes you may as well. Where is Edward, out at the barn?

RUBE
I guess so. (PULLS CAP OVER HIS EARS)

HANK
(ENTERS D. R. 2 WITH LOUISA) Say, Ezra, I wish we were going to remain for the dance over there tonight.

EZRA
I reckon our dancing days are over, Hank.

HANK
Huh, they may be for you; you're getting so durn old.

EZRA
Well, I'm not so durn old but what I can salaam left and grand promenade with the best of 'em yet. (DOES A STEP OR TWO)

HANK
If it wasn't for my rheumaticky leg I'd show you a thing or two. Say, Ezra, don't you remember how we used to go to all the dances and masking bees when we were boys.

EZRA
Yes indeed. Those were great days. (SIGHS) Great days!

HANK
I was the prize dancer in them days. (DANCE FEW STEPS)

RUBE
Look out for your rheumatix Hank.

HANK
Oh, oh, my rheumaticky leg. (TAKES BOTTLE OUT OF POCKET AND DRINKS)

RUBE
Out comes the Long Life Bitters! haw, shw haw, (LAUGHS LOUDLY AND EXITS L. U.)

EZRA
Better get your things on, Louisa. (IS BACK OF TABLE & PUTTING ON OVER*
CONT)

LOUISA
Very well, Ezra. Dora, please bring my wraps will you?

DORA
Certainly Miss Wiggins. (EXITS R. U. UP STAIRS)

HANK
Shh shhhh, hush, now that us three are here all alone, I've got something to tell you.

EZRA
What is it, Hank?

HANK
(NODS TOWARDS R. U.) Mighty good looking gal that.

EZRA
Why yes; I don't see nothing the matter with Dora's looks.

HANK
But ye never can tell how far a frog will jump by his looks.

EZRA
What's a jumping frog got to do with Dora's looks?

HANK
A heap as you'll find out.

LOUISA
Yes, Ezra, I'm sorry to say that Hank and me has been hearing a heap about that girl. It's burdened me a powerful lot of late, but I didn't want to pester you with it until we had some proof.

EZRA
(STARTLED) Now don't you two go to telling me anything against Dora. I just couldn't stand to hear anything bad about her.

LOUISA
That's the worst of it. But when Hank and me heard the story, we says to each other, "It's our duty to tell Ezra, and then he can act as he sees fit."

EZRA
(NODS HEAD) Yes sir.

EZRA
Well, what is it? Out with it. Let's hear what you've found out about the girl. (X TO L. OF TABLE)

HANK
Well, I've heard that this girl, Dora, used to live in Belden, and that she was called Mrs. Judson, and there wasn't no wedding ring on her finger either.

EZRA
(FIRMLY TO LOUISA) Well, what did you hear?

LOUISA
I heard the same thing, only more of it. That she lived in Belden under the name of Mrs. Judson, and after her mother died, Dora was took sick herself and a baby was born.

EZRA
What's that? Are you sure it was this same girl whose name is Dora Dean?

LOUISA
Dead certain! Her mother's name was Dean, and she always called the girl Dora. So I'd like to ask this question, why should she call herself Mrs. Judson, in Belden, and Dora Dean here? Who's her husband? Where's her wedding ring--and how about that baby?

EZRA
(ANGRY) What, a woman in my house that folks are talking about, and pointing the finger of scorn at? Well, she shan't stay here any longer. I'll call her and turn her out at once. (STARTS TOWARDS R. U.)

LOUISA
Don't be too hasty, Ezra. There might be some possible mistake.

EZRA
You are right, Louisa. This may be just some idle gossip. I don't want to do anything I'll be sorry for; I've got to have the real proof.

HANK
And I'll tell ye right where ye can get the proof.

EZRA
Who're?

HANK
At the party tonight. A minister and doctor will be at Belden from Belden will be at Leonards for supper, and they can tell you all about it.

LOUISA
Maybe it taint true, Ezra, maybe it will turn out to be a mistake.

EZRA
I hope so, Louisa. I hope so. But if I find out that she's been deceiving me by hiding a shameful past beneath my roof, she shan't stay here another minute. If I learn it is the truth about the girl, out she goes, and the same with any other member of my family of whom such a charge can be proven.

DORA
(ENTERS FROM R. U. DOWN STAIRS) Here's your things, Miss Wiggins.

LOUISA
Thank you, Dora. (PUTTING ON COAT, DORA HELPING HER HANDS BONNET OR HAT TO HER)

DORA
Oh, how nice you look, Miss Wiggins. (HANK PUTS ON OVER COAT AND CAP)

LOUISA

Do I? (EZRA GLARES AT DORA AS HE PUTS ON CAP)

RUBE

(ENTERS L. U.) The team is hitched up and waiting for you.

LOUISA

Ready, Ezra?

EZRA

(GRUFFLY) Yes!

LOUISA

Well, let's be going. Come on, Hank. (EXITS L. U.)

HANK

I'm a coming. (EXITS L. U. AFTER LOUISA)

EZRA

Be sure and take good care of the house.

RUBE

Yep. (REMOVES CAP AND MUFFLER HANGS THEM UP AND X DOWN OVER R. AND RUB READS JOKE BOOK)

DORA

Yes, we will, Mr. Tompkins, and I hope you have a pleasant time.
(TAKES A STEP OR TWO TOWARDS HIM, SMILING)

EZRA

(FIRMLY AS HE TURNS TOWARDS HER) Thanks. (LOOKING AT HER SHARPLY)

DORA

(FRIGHTENED) Why, Mr. Tompkins, what makes you look at me like that?

EZRA

Don't be frightened. I'm still trying to have faith in you; that's all. (TAKES HER FACE BETWEEN HIS HANDS AND LOOKS DOWN INTO HER EYES) Dora if your heart is pure you have no need to fear. Ever since you've been here I've believed in you, believed you to be a good girl, and I hope I never hear anything to the contrary. Good night. (TURNS AND EXITS L. U.)

DORA

Good night. (TURNS TO RUBE) How strange he acts.

RUBE

Oh don't mind him; that's just his way. (LOOKING AT BOOK) Now we will have some more jokes. Gosh this is the funniest book I ever saw. (SHOWS BOOK TO HER. LAUGHS)

DORA

(GLANCES AT PICTURES IN BOOK) Yes, Rube that is funny. (SMILES)

RUBE

Here's a funny conundrum. "What makes a chicken go across the street?" Because its none of the rooster business." Haw, haw haw. This is the funniest book I ever saw, "Have you seen Hazel?" "Which Hazel" No Pounds extract. Haw haw haw this is the funniest book I

ever saw (READS) "A poor old man was walking up the street 35
this morning when he got sun struck. His son struck him for five
dollars." (DORA LAUGHS, BUT RUBE DOESN'T BECAUSE HE DOESN'T SEE THE
POINT OF THE JOKE) (LOOKS UP AT DORA) Oh y' es I didn't see the point
at first. haw haw haw. That's the best one yet yet. HAW HAW. (SLEIGH
BELLS RINGED WAY OFF L.)

DORA

There is some one coming down the road, Rube. Please see who it is.
(SHE IS SEATED L. OF TABLE SEWING)

RUBE

Oh, all right. (X TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT)

DORA

Who is it, Rube?

RUBE

(AT WINDOW LOOKING OUT) I can't see good. (BADS STOP) But they're
coming here whoever it is. Oh shucks I hope they won't stay long.
(KNOCK HEARD AT L. U.) Well, come on in.

HARVEY BARTON

(ENTERS L. U.) Ah good evening, felks. (REMOVES OVERCOAT AND CAP)

RUBE

There aint no one at home here, Mr. Barton. They've all gone over to
Leonards to the surprise party.

HARVEY

Indeed? That's too bad. I just dropped in for a little chat, and
now that I'm here I believe that I'll stop and get warm.

DORA

(IS NERVOUS STARTS TO RISE AND GO)

HARVEY

(THROWS OVER COAT BACK OF CHAIR R. OF TABLE) Don't go, Miss Dean,
I want to speak to you, and say, Rube, I want you to go out and hold
my horse, I'm afraid he won't stand in the cold.

RUBE

Ah ding dang it--durn it; and jes' as I was enjoying myself with
"pickings from Puck"

HARVEY

(TAKES COIN FROM POCKET AND HANDS IT TO RUBE) Here keep this for
yourself, and stay out there till I come.

RUBE

(LOOKS AT COIN AND GRINS) Gosh, I'll save that for the first circus
that comes to town. (GETS CAP MUFFLER AND MITTS PUTS THEM ON) I see
what's the matter with you. (LOOKS FROM DORA TO HIM) Two is company
and three is worse than none. (LAUGHS LOUDLY AND EXITS L. U.)

DORA

(CROSSING OVER R.) You wish to speak to me?

HARVEY

Yes, I've been trying to get a word with you ever since you came here.
I knew that they'd be at the party tonight and that I'd find you alone

DORA

I don't know what more there is to be said between you and me. I had hoped and prayed that I might never see your face again.

HARVEY

That's just exactly what I want. It's very unpleasant for me for you to remain herein this neighborhood. I've come tonight to make you a proposition. If you will go away and promise never to return I'll give you five hundred dollars.

DORA

I refuse!

HARVEY

Oh it isn't enough, eh? Then I'll make it a thousand--

DORA

No. (CROSSING OVER L.)

HARVEY

Oh, perhaps you think that now that I have fell heir to some property you can make a good thing out of me. Maybe you imagine you can compel me to marry you.

DORA

(WHIRLS ON HIM) Oh don't say any more. Is it possible that I was ever weak enough and ignorant enough to imagine that I loved you? I have only contempt for you now. If the thought ever came to me that I might some day force you to right the wrong, you done me it was buried in the grave with our little child. (SINKS DOWN IN CHAIR L OF TABLE)

HARVEY

Then the child is dead?

DORA

Yes, at first I thought I should go mad in my loneliness and despair (TURNS UP STAGE, WIPES TEAR AWAY, TURNS AND COMES DOWN BACK OF TABLE) But I realize now that it was better, so our child she now lies in the church yard in her little grave at Beldon. She will never know, she will never weep for her mother's wrongs, or blush for her father's infamy.

HARVEY

Confound it, Dora, you needn't be so hard on a fellow. Come now how much money will you take to go away and call things square?

DORA

(FIRMLY) You can't square the ruin of a woman's life with money and I don't want any of yours.

HARVEY

Then you don't intend to make me any trouble?

DORA

No, no!

HARVEY

And you will promise not to interfere with my plans to make Missie Leonard my wife?

DORA
(SURPRISED) Elsie Leonard your wife? Oh no no that is impossible. Why she is engaged to marry Edward Tompkins.

HARVEY

(SNEERS) What tha t country bumpkin? Oh I guess not, not if I know the girl, and I think I do. She can't resist me. I've always won any woman I wanted; why when it comes to a choice between Ed Tompkins and a geneltnena like me you will see that Elsie Leonard will choose me.

DORA

Oh what shall I do? I ought to tell her--I must tell her,

HARVEY

(FIRMLY) If you do, it settles you here.

DORA

Yes, yes, I know that.

HARVEY

And it wouldn't hurt me a bit.

DORA

Why not?

HARVEY

Oh I mean my little affiar with you was only wild oats; every fellow has to sow his wild oats, you know.

DORA

But what about me?

HARVEY

Oh, it's different with you. (SMILES)

DORA

Yes, it's different with me--very much different, yours was the crime--mine has been the punishment, and it always will be--it always will be.

HARVEY

Confound it now, Dora, let us settle this. Now name your price and I will pay it.

DORA

(FIRMLY AND QUICKLY) There is no price on me; I am not a woman to be bought and sold. Now let this and all talk between us. Some day we may be able to meet again under different circumstances, and I may be able to repay you--in part, at least for the suffering you have caused me and mine. (FIRMLY OVER TOP OF TABLE AT HIM)

HARVEY

Oh you mean to threateah me, eh? (ANGRY) Now let me tell you something right here. (BRINGS FIST DOWN ON TABLE JUST AS EDWARD ENTERS)

EDWARD

(HAS ENTERED L. U. AND STANDS WATCHING) Why not tell it to me?

HARVEY

(LOOKS AROUND, SURPRISED, CONFUSED) Why--er--hello, Ed..(X OVER R.)

EDWARD
What's the matter here, Dora? Do you need my help?

DORA
(ALARMED) No, no, Edward, its nothing--nothing at all.

HARVEY
(SMILES) I came over here for a little chat with the folks this evening. They were not like to be back from the party for awhile yet so I will go and put my horse in the barn. (GETS CAP AND EXITS L. U.)

EDWARD
Dora, what is Barton doing here?

DORA
You heard what he said.

EDWARD
Dora, do you love that man, and does he love you?

DORA
Why, Edward, how strangely you talk. You have no right to speak to me like this.

EDWARD
Right or not. I want an answer and I'm going to have it.

DORA
Edward!

EDWARD
Forgive me; I didn't mean to be rough with you. But I don't like the way that man acts towards you. I know that you are far above him and he don't treat you with respect that's due you--I can't bear to see you slighted, that's why I'm here now--that's why I aint to the party for any house that's too good for you is too good for me.

DORA
Why should you take this interest in me? I'm your father's servant my troubles mean nothing to you.

EDWARD
Nothing to me? Why, Dora, I love you.

DORA
You must not speak so to me. Oh how can you say this to me when you are engaged to marry Elsie Leonard.

EDWARD
I'm never going to marry her, she knows it can never be. I know its my father's wish, but he can't compell me to take one woman for my wife when my heart and soul is filled with another. I love you and you love me, I can see it in your face--hear it in your voice, Dora, I want you for my wife.

DORA
No no! (Sobs) You must forget me. Oh I can't be your wife. I can never be any man's wife--never! (FALLS IN CHAIR L. SOBBING)

EDWARD EZRA
(HEARD OFF L.) It's no use to talk, Louisa, It's got to be settled right now. (ENTERS L. U. FOLLOWED BY LOUISA AND BARTON) ED

EDWARD

Why, father, I didn't care to go that's all.

EZRA

No---and I know the cause. (POINTS TO DORA) She is the cause--she is the cause--she with her artful ways has stolen the affection out of your heart that belongs to another, that is why you are not at Leonard's party tonight. She has made you fall in love with her, she has brought sorrow upon this household, Dora Dean I never would have believed it of you.

DORA

(PLEADINGLY) Oh please don't blame me Mr. Tompkins, it is not my fault, I have not encouraged your son. I don't want his love, and I have told him so. (RUBE ENTERS AND LISTENS)

EZRA

What's the reason that you don't want his love? There ain't a better boy in this whole country than my son, Edward. Any woman ought to be proud of his love.

DORA

(WITH A GLEAM OF HOPE) Oh, Mr. Tompkins, suppose I did love him? Would you want that?

EZRA

(FIRMLY) No, that could never be. Something seemed to tell me that you would bring trouble to this house. I wish we'd never set eyes on you.

DORA

Oh don't say that. You have been so good and kind to me, and I value your esteem above everything else in the world. I will go away, Edward, will soon forget me. He will marry as you wish him to and happiness will come to your home again.

EZRA

(STILL ANGRY) Well, happiness can't come to it, while you are here, so you will have to leave---and leave at once, what few belongings you have will be sent to the hotel at the village tomorrow and you can call for them there. Now go! (SHE CROSSES UP TO HALL TREE AND GETS HER HAT AND CLOAK AND PUTS THEM ON)

EDWARD

(AS SHE GOES UP) Stop, Dora. (HE RUSHES UP AND STANDS BETWEEN HER AND THE DOOR L. U.) You can't go out tonight in that storm. Father, you are unjust. What's this girl done that you should treat her like this? What are you thinking of? You will regret those words tomorrow.

EZRA

I know what I'm doing, so stand aside and let her go out that door.

DORA

Yes, let me go.

EDWARD

Father, if she goes out that door tonight, I go also.

EZRA

(STARTLED) WHAT? Y

ou woul

would leave your father's house for that girl? who is nothing to you one way or the other?

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EDWARD

She is everything to me, I love her. (PUTS ARM AROUND HER)

EZRA

(TO DORA) So it is true. You have caused him to fall in love with you eh? You ingrate! I took you into my house. I gave you food and shelter when you had neither home nor friends to go to, and now you repay my kindness by coming between me and my dearest wish, out of my house--you beggar--out I say and never let me see your face again.

EDWARD

Stop, father; you are insulting the woman I want for my wife.

EZRA

(SHOCKED) Your wife? Do you know who and what she is? I heard it but I wouldn't believe it until I got the proof of it at Leonard's tonight. Ask her about the child that is buried in Beldon church yard--her child that died without an honest name---That's part of her shameful history.

EDWARD

Oh, no no!

EZRA

Yes, its the truth and she leaves this house tonight.

EDWARD DORA

(TO EZRA) When you found out so much about me, did you also learn that I thought myself to be an honorable wife--that a black hearted villain deceived me by a mock marriage?

EZRA

I don't care to hear another word. There's the door; now get out.

EDWARD LOUISA

No, father, please let her stay tonight.

DORA

(QUICKLY) No no I don't want to stay; you're all against me. (TO EZRA) You have pronounced me a guilty thing. I am a lone woman. I have no friends, very well I'll go into the night--out into the world--out into the blinding snow storm. You have passed judgement upon me and called my guilty, but in the sight of God my heart is clean, and I ---I hope I may never look upon your faces again. (QUICKLY TURNS AND EXITS L. U. NOTE: SNOW EFFECT HAS BEEN WORKING ALL THROUGH THIS SCENE)

EDWARD

(GRABS COAT AND CAP)

EZRA

Edward, what are you going to do?

EDWARD

I'm going with her, and take her to a place of safety. (EXITS L. U.)

RUBE

(GRABS COAT AND CAP)

EZRA
Where are you going, Rube?

RUBE
I'm going to help Ed with Dora, and tomorrow we'll search for the villain that wronged her. (EXITS L. U.)

EZRA
(SINKS DOWN IN CHAIR L. HESSES FACE IN HIS HANDS WITH BOWED HEAD. LOUISA STANDS AS IF SPELL BOUND AS CURTAIN COMES DOWN)

(C U R T A I N)

(End of Act Two)

LOUISA

(DISCOVERED AT RISE ARRANGING FLOWERS AROUND ROOM) There now I've come the best I can to slick things up and to make the house as cheerful as possible. We've had nothing but gloom in this house ever since Dora Dean was driven away from here two years ago. Edward don't come home no more, and Ezra, is as glum as an oyster. He don't seem to notice a thing I do any more. Why I don't suppose he'll ever notice how I've arranged these flowers all around the house, well if he don't I'm going to get good and hot under the collar and give him a piece of my mind. (X OVER R.)

EZRA

(ENTERS FROM L. U. WITH WORK CLOTHES ON X TO TABLE PICKS UP NEWSPAPER)

LOUISA

Hello, Ezra.

EZRA

(GRUFFLY) Hello. (SITS AT TABLE AND RAID'S)

LOUISA

How are you, Ezra? (PAUSE) What's the matter. Aint you feeling well?

EZRA

(GRUFFLY) I'm feeling weell enough I guess.

LOUISA

Weell? --have you noticed anything unusual about the house?

EZRA

(WHARILY) NO I reckon not. (LOOKING AT NEWSPAPER)

LOUISA

(ASIDE) I knew it. He don't notice a thing I do (TO HIM) See here, Ezra Tompkins, if you don't appreciate me and the work I do around this place I'm going to leave. I'm not stuck for a home. Hank Stump will furnish me with a home, and all I've got to do is to marry him to get it.

EZRA

Why, what's the matter, Louisa?

LOUISA

Don't you see those flowers?

EZRA

(LOOKING AROUND) Yes.

LOUISA

Don't you notice how I work to make things cheerful about the house?

EZRA

I certainly do, Louisa.

LOUISA

Then why don't you say something about it once in awhile? I don't see what's come over you, you are as glum as an old owl. What's the matter, are you glum and sorry because you drove that girl away from the house two years ago?

EZRA
I aint never sorry for going according to the scriptures. I thought I was doing right in driving her away, and if I did wrong, the Lord will forgive me because I thought I was doing right.

LOUISA

Of course you thought so, and I don't blame you for doing what you think is right, and yet I've felt sorry for that girl you drove away from the house that cold winters night. Ezra, she's never been heard of since.

EZRA

No, she completely disappeared. No doubt she went to some large city and surrounded herself with the follies of her own station in life. But the thing that hurts my sad old heart is that my son, Edward, never comes home any more.

LOUISA

Well, we know where he is all the time. He's still working down at Boston, and as for the girl, well she may have committed suicide.

EZRA

If I thought that, and I thought I was the cause of it, I would repent of it until my dying hour.

LOUISA

Well, we a ting certain that she committed suicide as you needn't take on so about it.

EZRA

No, we are not certain. But there is one thing w~~h~~ am certain of and that is if you and Hank Stump hadn't a been putting in your meddling interference there wouldn't have been any trouble I wouldn't have known anything about the girl's past life, and wouldn't have gone to the trouble to dig it up. . But of course when you started in to spread the shameful report about her, I had to set upon it, I wish folks would quit poking thier noses in other people's business and learn to keep their mouths shut about matters that don't concern them.

LOUISA

(ANGRY) Indeed? Well, you aint got no right to find fault with me and Hank Stump. It was all true, wasn't it? You wouldn't want Ed to marry the girl, would you? And that is what it would have come to if it hadn't of been for Hank and me. This is the thanks I get for trying to do my duty. Well, I aint going to stay here and be found fault with, Ezra Tompkins, I'm going to leave this house.

EZRA

(STARTLED) No, no, Louisa; don't mind me in the midst of my trouble. My feelings are all aroused up with grief because of my boy, Edward, there aint no need for him to stay away from home like this. He won't accept a cent from me. (WIPE'S TEARS AWAY) and I am unable to learn how he is getting along there in Boston.

LOUISA

Well, Rube Hawkins has been down to Boston spending a whole week with Edward. Rube will be home tonight, and he will tell us all about Edward, now let's forget the gloom and be of good cheer.

EZRA

I'll try to be, Louisa, I'll try to be. (WIPE'S TEAR AWAY) A

if I've said anything to hurt your feelings, I hope you'll forgive me.

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LOUISA

(TENDERLY) That's all right, Cousin Ezra. (STROKES HIS HAIR, PLACES ARM AROUND HIS SHOULDER) Don't go to taking on so now.

EZRA

(TAKING HER HAND IN HIS) You've been faithful to me Louisa, and I appreciate it, Louisa, I appreciate it. (WIPES TEARS AWAY)

LOUISA

Now you just cheer up. I'll get supper ready and Rube will soon be here to tell us the good news. (KNOCK HER RD AT L. U.) Now I wonder who that is? (X TO WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT) Oh, it's Mr. Barton. (CALLS) Come in, Mr. Barton, come in by the bay window, we keep it open now to let the sun shine in--when it shines.

HARVEY

(ENTERS C.) How do you do, everybody.

EZRA

How are you, Mr. Barton. Be seated.

HARVEY

Thanks. (X TO SOFA R.) I'll sit here. How is everything, Mr. Tompkins

EZRA

Oh, all right, I reckon. How are you getting on?

HARVEY

Oh, I'm getting along great. I've bought another piece of land about that eight acres right back of my place.

EZRA

You have? Well, that's the best piece of land in this county.

HARVEY

I don't intend to have anything but the best. I've got the finest place in the country now, and then I get thru with the improvements I intend to make, the future Mrs. Harvey Barton will have a home to be proud of.

LOUISA

Who are you going to marry?

HARVEY

Why, haven't you heard?

LOUISA

No I'm not in the habit of poking in my noise in other people's buisness

HARVEY

(LAUGHS) Well, we never get too old to learn Miss Wiggins.

LOUISA

Of course we've heard you were going to marry Elsie Leonard.

HARVEY

Well, you heard about right, and you can tell it all you want I aint ashamed of it. Elsie Leonard is well thought of and she,

and she's got a lot of property. (TO EZRA) Mr. Tempkins, I 46
hope you don't feel hard towards me for taking Jessie away from Ed.

EZRA

Oh no, not at all.

HARVEY

You see Ed had his chance and threw it away.

LOUISA

(INDIGNANTLY) Yes indeed Edwa're could have had her if he'd wanted her

HARVEY

But he preferred Dora Dean, huh? queer taste he had. By the way she has never been heard of since you drove her away has she?

EZRA

No.

LOUISA

No, nobody has ever seen hide nor hair of her since. Poor girl. Perhaps if the truth was known she wasn't so much to blame after all. I'd like to know who the villian was that wronged her. (BARTON STARTS) Well, who ever he is, he'll get his, he'll be brought to suffer for it before he dies. What do you say, Ezra?

EZRA

(FIRMLY C.) I say that any man who wrongs a true hearted innocent girl aint fit to live on earth.

HARVEY

(STARTS ASIDE) Has Ed been home lately?

EZRA

No, he's still in Boston.

HARVEY

He don't come home any more, eh? Where's Rube?

LOUISA

He's been visiting Ed down at Boston. We expect him home tonight.

RUBE

(LAUGHING OFF L. U.) Haw, haw, haw.

LOUISA

That's him now. (RUNS TO WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT) Yes, here he comes.

RUBE

(ENTERS C. D. LEWIS DRESSED UP WITH A TIGHT FITTING STORE SUIT ON. RED TIE, SAILOR HAT WHICH IS TOO SMALL FOR HIM AND ETC. HE LAUGHS AS HE ENTERS) Gosh, that's the most fun I've had since I left Boston, jes as I came in the yard them two big white roosters was having a fight over the little red hen, and that little banty rooster came along and licked the stuffing out of both of them big white roosters, and then walked off with the little red hen as big as life, haw, haw, haw.

EZRA

Well, Rube, how's Boston?

Oh its still here. Hello, Mr. Barton, hello everybody.

RUBE

Hello, Rube. I suppose you took in the sights down at Boston.

RUBE

I say I did you wouldn't know the city of Boston now.

EZRA

Why?

RUBE

'Cause I painted it red. (ALL LAUGH) Yes sires, Edward, and me took in everything that was going the theateres and all and everything else you could mention and some things you could mention, haw, haw, haw.

EZRA

Is Edward getting along all right?

RUBE

Yep, Ed and me went all over the city. We didn't have to walk either. We rode in street cars and taxies, I tell you that Ed is well thought of there in Boston. They set up and take notice of him.

LOUISA

Why what do you mean, Rube?

RUBE

Why it didn't make any difference what street corner he was on all Ed had to do was to hold up his hand and the cars would stop for us to get on. (BARTON LAUGHS)

EZRA

When Edward coming home?

RUBE

Well, that all depends.

EZRA

Depends on what?

RUBE

On what you'll say about bringing his girl home with him.

EZRA

His girl?

RUBE

Yep, he's got a new girl and he's going to marry her.

LOUISA

What kind of a girl is she, Rube?

RUBE

Gosh she's a peach, she's a star.

EZRA

A star?

RUBE

YEP, she's an actress a star what sings in all the big theatres

EZRA
What, my son going to marry an actress?

RUBE
Well, you needn't be ashamed of her. She's well thought of there in Boston. She just finished her twenty eight weeks engagement in Boston last night, she sings in churches too, and money--she's going to New York city for a long engagement, Edward is going with her. They are going to be married in New York.

EZRA
And he's not coming home to see us before he goes?

RUBE
Yep, he's coming.

EZRA
He's coming?

RUBE
Yep, Ed is going to bring her tonight, and maybe before very long. You know its only about half an hours run from Boston to her. Now here's the proposition, Ed said to tell you he was coming with her to night, and that if it wasn't all right with you for him to come with her, I am to send him a telegram telling him not to bring her. And that will mean that he won't be here.

EZRA
So he wants to bring another strange woman into my house, eh? And me not knowing who or what she is.

RUBE
Well, if you don't want him to come with her, I've got to send him a telegram not to come, and if you do want him to come, I aint got to send nothing.

EZRA
Go and send the telegram, Rube.

RUBE
What?

EZRA
Go and send the telegram telling him to come by all means and to bring whoever he likes.

RUBE
But there aint no use to send it if its all right with you for them to come.

EZRA
Go and send it just the same and tell him we'll give him a hearty welcome.

RUBE
Well, all right, I'll phone the message to the village and send the telegram from here. (EXITS DOOR R. 2ND)

LOUISA
That means that we've got to slick up a bit.

EZRA
Yes, slick up and dress up and be ready to receive them in proper style.

LOUISA

Then you must change your clothes, and be sure to put on your dress suit--your evening dress suit, and Rube must do the same. (EXIT R. 2)

HARVEY

(RISES) I dropped in to have a pleasant chat with you, Mr. Tompkins. But since you are to have company perhaps I had better be going.

EZRA

Not all. Mr. Barton, I shall be pleased to have you remain; the more the merrier.

HARVEY

Thank you. In that case I'll ride over home and change my clothes. I'll be right back. (EXITS C. D.)

EZRA

Very well, Mr. Barton. (CALLS) Rube, hurry up, Rube, and change your clothes. (EXITS R. U. UPSTAIRS)

RUBE

(ENTERS R. 2. WITH COAT AND VEST ON HIS ARM) Aw shucks I've got to go and put them tail clothes, and I feel like a dressed up monkey in them. (EXITS R. U. UPSTAIRS) (HANK KNOCKS AT L. U.)

LOUISA

(IN TARS FROM D. R. X TO WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT) Hello, Hank, is that you? Come right in this way.

HANK

(ENTERS C.) How be you Louisa?

LOUISA

Oh, we're all upset with excitement, Edward will be here pretty soon and he's bringing some strange lady with him.

HANK

Huh, that so? What's her name?

LOUISA

Why Rube just told me that her name is Julia Windgale.

HANK

Julia Windgale? Why she aint no strange woman. She's a well known star. The whole city of Boston is excited over her. You see I take the Boston papers, and I know. (X OVER R.)

LOUISA

My goodness. Well, I must go and change my dress.

HANK

Change your dress? Why you're perfectly all right to meet any one. You're right in style.

LOUISA

Now what makes you think I'm right in style, Hank?

HANK
You can't fool me. All you've got to do is remove that house-
apron and you'll step forward like a circus horse decked for the saw
dust ring.

LOUISE
See here, Hank Stump, you've got to quit comparing me with a horse.
I want you to understand I'm no horse.

HANK
No, Louisa, you're a bird, and a bird I've been trying to catch for
the last thirty years, sixteen years.

LOUISA
But the little bird is not so easily caught, is she, Hank? (SMILES
AT HIM) Now that reminds me; I ~~want~~ had a parrot that was the most
intelligent bird I ever saw.

HANK
Oh he knew more than you did, eh?

LOUISA
Yes, he knew more than I did--(HANK LAUGHS) No he didn't know more
than I did--certainly not, now this parrot of mine could whistle
"Home Sweet Home" so beautifully that the tears used to run down his
back.

HANK
Huh, that's nothing my brother Seth had a parrot that could whistle
The Village Blacksmith so beautifully that the sparks used to fly
from his tail.

LOUISA
Indeed? I suppose you used to feed him on your Long Life Bitters?

HANK
Now, Louisa, I want to have a serious talk with you. Now I've had a
heavy burden on my mind for a long time.

LOUISA
Well, now's the time to unload it and relieve your brain.

HANK
Louisa, I want you to share my lot in life.

LOUISA
Now, Hank, are you proposing to me. (GIGGLES)

HANK
By gum I'm trying to Louisa, the fact is you are the rosebud of my
throbbing heart, your smiles--you smiles are like--are like--
the sunshine that comes with the morning sun.

LOUISA
Oh, Hank, you make me blush. (GIGGLES)

HANK
Your face is an inspiration to me at all times, your voice reminds
me of the chimes of sweet wedding bells, see I shall fall at your
shrine and worship at your feet. (GIVES DOWN ON KNEES) Oh, oh, oh, my
rheumaticky leg. (TAKES BOTTLE FROM POCKET AND DRINKS)

LOUISA

Oh, Hank, its too bad you have the rheumatix so you can't find a cure for them more than yo'r Loong Life Bitters.

HANK

Shakdg dndzdk ddk hndtk Nope these bitters are good enough for me. (TURN BACK HER AND DRINKS AGAIN*)

LOUISA

(QUICKLY SLIES UP BEHIND HIM AND GRABS BOTTLE AWAY FROM HIM) Here let me have a swallow of them long life bitters. I haven't been feeling any too well here of late. (TAKES A BIG SWALLOW FROM BOTTLE COUCHS SPITS AND STRUGGLES)

HANK

(PATTING HER ON THE BACK) Oh, Louisa, they are too strong for you, aint they?

LOUISA

(GLARES AT HIM) Too strong? I should say they are, they are strong enough to kill a horse. (SMELES OF BOTTLE. HANK TRIES TO TAKE IT FROM HER) Why, that aint bitters, that's whiskey.

HANK

Oh Lord I'm discovered.

LOUISA

Aint that whiskey?

HANK

Yes, Louisa, its perfectly good Bourbon Whiskey.

LOUISA

So you've been pretending to take medicine for your rheumatism all these years and drinking whiskey on the sly, and you an officer of the law.

HANK

But, Louisa, I--I--

LOUISA

For shame on you. (X TO WINDOW AND THROWS BOTTLE AWAY AND IT IS HEARD TO BREAK SHE TURNS TO HIM) Hank Stump, if you expect to marry me you've got to take the pledge.

HANK

I tell you I can't get along without my Long Life Bitters.

LOUISA

Well, you can have your Long Life Bitters, but I'll do the buying of them.

HANK

Well, all right, Louisa, that's a bargain. I'd do anything for you Louisa, cause you're a mighty fine woman. (RUBE ENTERS R. U. STANDS AND LISTENS) And by gum I'd do anything wo win you. (ARM AROUND HER)

RUBE

You may win the pot, and you again you may not. Wedding bells and rice old maids and advice, its all in the game, and the world goes on just the same. haw, haw, haw.

HANK
(ANGRY) You young scamp. (SLAPS AT HIM) Oh oh oh.

RUBE
Jest missed me. Look out for your rheumatix Hank.

LOUISA
You--you--you. 9 (SLAPS AT HIM)

RUBE
You jes missed me, haw, haw haw. (X TO WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT) Gosh its pretty near time for Ed and Miss Wingale to arrive.

LOUISA
What so soon?

RUBE
Sure thing. I sent that telegram over half an hour ago. I'll bet she and Ed will come in her automobile, she's got an automobile that cost three thousand dollars,

HANK
Three thousand dollars? By gum that would buy me enough Long Life Bitters to last me ten years.

LOUISA
I suppose she'll be dressed pretty fine.

RUBE
She'll be dressed tit to kill 'cause I told them we was going to make this an evenint dress party. (AUTO HORN OFF L.) Hello that's them now, that's her car. I can tell b, the sound of the horn.

LOUISA
(EXCITED) Gracious me, I must get this apron off. (QUICKLY EXITS R.)

ZERA
(ENTERS R. U. DOWN STAIRS IN EVENING DRESS) Are they coming?

RUBE
(EXCITED) Yep, they're here now. (UP TO WINDOW C. LOOKING OFF L.) Come right this way, Ed. (TO ZERA) Jumping grass hoppers she's got diamonds all over her. Jess wait till you see her they're in the hall now, Ed is helping her remove her wraps.

ZERA
(ANXIOUS) Well, we are ready for them.

LOUISA
(ENTERS FROM DOOR R. WITH APRON OFF WHICH REVEALS AN EVENING DRESS OF HAIR STATION IN LIFE) Oh, Zera, (CROSSING OVER TO HIM) Are they coming? How do I look?--Is my hat on straight?

ZERA
What---eh hat?

LOUISA
I mean is my hair all right. (HANK STANDS OVER R. SMILING)

RUBE
Heads up. Here they come.

DORA

(LEMMERS C. WITH EDWARD. SLIGHT PAUSE AS THEY STOP UP C. ALL EYES ARE ON JULIA AS SHE IS DRESSED LIKE A SMALL EVENING GOWN. SHE LOOKS LIKE A WOMAN AS SHE HOLDS HER POSITION UP C.)

EDWARD

(AFTER SLIGHT PAUSE) Father.

AZRA

(HETTING R. C.) My son! (GIVING HIM A HEARTY HAND SHAKE)

EDWARD

Miss Windgale my father.

AZRA

(BOWS) Pleased to meet you.

DORA

Thank you. (BOWS)

LOUISA EDWARD

(INTRODUCING HER TO LOUISA) My cousin, Miss Wiggins.

LOUISA

Glad to meet you, (BOBS HEAD. DORA BOWS)

EDWARD

(INTRODUCING HER TO HANK) Mr. Stump.

HANK

(STRAIGHTENS UP WITH IMPORTANCE) I've read about you, Miss Windgale. and I'm delighted to meet you. (MAKES BIG BOW)

AZRA

Look out for your rheumatix, Hank. (HANKS SHOWS HIS LEG HURTS BUT SAYS NOTHING ABOUT IT)

RUBE

(WITH IMPORTANCE) Miss Windgale, I guess you remember me,

DORA

I certainly do and I'm pleased to see you again. (OFFERS HAND)

RUBE

Be you? (SHAKES HANDS WITH HER) Thanks. (SIGHS ASIDE) Gosh I wish I had a girl like her.

AZRA

Miss Windgale, I welcome you to my house.

DORA R

Again I thank you, Mr. Tompkins.

AZRA

Of course it may seem rather dull to you out here on the farm after enjoying the pleasures of city life.

EDWARD DORA

I love to be in the country. It holds forth more charm to me than the noisy city. The open air, the vast fields of grain and sweet clover, the birds and the beautiful flowers all appeal to me--yes I am simply carried away with country life.

Well, in that case you should be a farmer's wife.

Well, Edward is a farmer's son. Haw, haw, haw. (EXITS R. 2)

You hush your noise.

(ENTERS C. IN EVENING DRESS) Good evening all.

Ah here's Mr. Barton. (DORA STARTS) Miss Windgale meet Mr. Barton
(ESRA TALKS ASIDE TO EDWARD HIS ARM AROUND EDWARD'S SHOULDER)

(BOWS) Delighted to meet you, Miss Windgale. (LOOKING AT HER CLOSELY)
Pardon me have you ever lived in this part of the country?

(RECOVERING HERSELF, SMILES) What makes you ask me that Mr. Barton?
(ESRA TALKS ASIDE TO EDWARD. HIS ARM AROUND EDWARD'S SHOULDER)

Because it seems to me that I have seen your face before. (LOUISA
IS BUSY SOOTHING THE FOLDS OUT OF HER DRESS)

(SMILES) Possibly we have met before, eh, Mr. Barton?

(LOOKING AT HER CLOSELY) It certainly seems that I have met you
before, but when and where I cannot remember. (X R.)

Possibly your memory may return to you, eh, Mr. Barton? (TO ED)
And now, Edward, if the folks will kindly excuse us for a few minutes
I should like to stroll out and look at the moon.

Certainly.

Why of course. (X TO HER)

(E UP C. WHILE SHE TURNS) Out in the country at night time the
moon is so beautiful with its dull soft rays spreading out over the
fields of green and golden shades. (EXITS C. WITH EDWARD)

Fields of green and golden shades, without a single sound except a
now and then the croak--croak of a frog, well I must go down to
the village. (ASIDE) must get there before the drug store closes
so I can get some more Long Life Bitters. (ALOUD) Well, so long, folks,
I'll see you later. (EXITS L. U.)

All right come again.

HARVEY

Well, Mr. Tompkins, your visitor--Miss Wingale seems to be quite a distinguished person.

EZRA

Yes, and it appears that I have seen her features before.

LOUISA

I noticed the same thing. Where in the world could we have met her before?

JESS HARVEY

Why can't you guess who she is? (LAUGHS) Who would have thought that the time would come to pass when you would be entertaining your former house-maid?

EZRA

What do you mean?

HARVEY

I mean that this woman--this actress who travels under the name of Julia Wingale is no other than Dora Dean.

LOUISA AND EZRA

(TOGETHER) Dora Dean?

HARVEY

Yes, two years ago she was your house maid, and now she is your honored guest. (X OVR TO R.)

LOUISA

(BEMUSED) Gracious me. I'll go and question her. (STARTS TO GO)

EZRA

Louisa, please tell Edward to come here at once.

LOUISA

Very well. (EXITS C.)

EZRA

That woman under my roof again, and Edward wants to marry her; it shall never take place if I can prevent it.

HARVEY

That's right, Mr. Tompkins, she is not worthy of him. You should compell Edward, to give her up and send her about her business.

EZRA

(QUICKLY LOOKS AT HIM) Still Edward is no longer a boy and he should know his own mind.

HARVEY

No man knows his own mind when a woman takes it. She ought to be put out of your house at once. (ASIDE) If she remains here, my chance with Elsie Leonard is ruined.

EDWARD

(ENTERS C.) You want me, father?

EZRA

Yes. Why did you plan this unpleasant surprise in bringing this

WOMAN HERE WHOM WE KNOW TO BE Dora Dean?

EDWARD

I want to explain at the proper time. I know what I am doing, father

EZRA

No, my son, you don't know what you are doing while under the influence of that woman.

EDWARD

Father you must not refer to her as "That woman". That LADY is worthy to be the wife of any man. We are to be married if you wish her to leave your house, we will go at once.

EZRA

Edward, I wish to have a talk with her--(LOOKS AT BARTON) and alone.

HARVEY

(BOWS) I will be excused. (EXITS L. U.)

EZRA

Certainly.^{1/2}

EDWARD

I will send her to you, father, but please remember she is our guest and an unwilling one. I had to beg her to come here, thinking you would forgive us, and I will not have her humiliated. (EXITS C.)

EZRA

My God why does this evil of the past hang around us still?

DORA

(ENTERS C.) You wish to speak to me, Mr. Tompkins? (COMES C.)

EZRA

Yes, I have learned your true identity. Why did you come here leading us to believe you were some other person than you were two years ago.

DORA

Because I AM a different person.

EZRA

I do not wish to harass your feelings. I am not a hard man, I am a man who dearly loves his family and naturally I am deeply interested in whoever my son is to marry.

DORA

I understand; and it is because of that, that I agreed to come here with Edward tonight.

EZRA

Pardon me, but I must say that there are many things about this matter which I cannot understand.

DORA

Perhaps that is because you cannot understand a woman in my position. You only understand your kind of persons--Mr. Tompkins--both men and women--those who were born with their living made for them their thinking, done for them, and their morals fixed for them, you don't know what it is to have to make your own life.

EZRA
I may not be able to grasp all the new ideas and excuses that float around these days, but I've seen life.

DORA

Yes, you've seen life, Mr. Tompkins--but I've lived it. You've stood by and looked on while others have struggled. I've struggled and suffered. You were born away from the fight; I was born in it. But I--oh I--I can't go on with this-- BEGINS TO BREAK) Mr. Tompkins, I love yours son--and he--I would do anything for his happiness. I love him.

EZRA

If you really love him the only way you can prove it is by not standing in the way of his happiness. He thinks he loves you now--

DORA

But--

EZRA

But Edward comes of a good old New England family. He has traditions to maintain, standards to be guided by. And if you really love him, you cannot, you will not stand in his way; therefore, you will have to give him up.

DORA

(QUICKLY AND FIRMLY) Yes, I will. He has traditions to live up to but there was only one handed down to me. I won't tell you what that is. But its enough to keep me from standing in the way of the man I love. So if you have persuaded Edward to think as you do, I will give him up. (PUTS HANKERCHIEF TO HER EYES)

EDWARD

(ENTERS C. FOLLOWED BY BARTON AND LOUISA. LOUISA X DOWN OVER L.)

HARVEY

Well, Miss Dora Dean my memory has returned to me. (SNEERS AS HE X DOWN R.)

DORA

(LIGHTLY) Oh has it? By the way, Mr. Barton, I met some one whom you know real well. Miss Elsie Leonard, she's been down to Boston a number of times since I've been there, and we became fast friends. (BARTON STARTS) She was down to Boston today and called me up and at my hotel. We had a real friendly chat and I finally told her the full story of my past life. She became deeply interested in it, and knowing I was coming here tonight, she gave me this note. (TAKES A SMALL LETTER FROM HER DRESS FRONT) She not only asked me to give it to you, but she requested me to read it to you in the presences of others, and I shall do so. (OPENS LETTER AND READS) "Mr. Harvey Barton, this is to inform you that I have broken our engagement I shall never marry you--signed Elsie Leonard--P. S. Don't try to see me, it will do no good. (HANDS LETTER TO HIM)

HARVEY

(TAKING LETTER) I don't believe it. There is some mistake.

DORA

(SMILING) Indeed? There is her handwriting which you know so well. Read for yourself.

HARVEY
 (LOOKING AT LETTER, CRUMPLES IT UP AND THROWS IT DOWN) It's some
 devilish plot and this woman is at the bottom of it. ♀ POINTS TO DORA
 Mr. Tompkins, there stands Dora Dean. You know her past history
 and I can't understand why you should let her remain under your roof
 another minute.

DORA

(RIGHT BACK AT HIM. STRONG) Oh don't worry I am leaving at once, but
 before I go I've got something more to say. (TURNS TO EZRA) Mr.
 Tompkins, two years ago I was a poor defenseless girl without one
 friendly hand to help me except your son, Edward. An ignorant
 trusting girl who had been tricked into a mock marriage by a man
 who called himself a gentleman. Two years ago one bitter cold stormy
 winters night I was driven from your door as a shameless thing with
 out a chance to defend myself. Well, tonight there is a man, an
 honored guest in your house. I mean him. (POINTING TO BARTON HE
 STARTS) Why don't you ask him what his past life has been? (STRONG)
 For he is the villain who betrayed me. He was the father of my
 child!

EZRA

What?

HARVEY

(PLEADINGLY) Don't be too hard on me, Dora. I admit that I didn't
 treat you right and I am ready to make amends. Marry me at once
 and let me atone for the past.

DORA

Are you willing to make me your lawful wife, to make me mistress
 of your home?

HARVEY

Yes, everything I possess I would lay at your feet. I will deed
 all my property to you if you will become my wife. (KNEELS TO HER)
 Come, Dora, what do you say?

DORA

I say no! Not even if you were to remain on your knees and beg me
 until dooms day. (BARTON RISES)

EZRA

See here, Barton, is it true that you went thru a marriage ceremony
 with this girl?

HARVEY

Yes.

EZRA

And it wasn't a real marriage.

HARVEY

No.

EZRA

But she thought it was, didn't she?

HARVEY

Yes.

EZRA
How did you make out to do that?

HARVEY
A college chum of mine passed himself off as the preacher.

EZRA
And now you want to marry her again, and in earnest this time?

HARVEY
(WITH A GLEAM OF HOPE) Yes if she will have me.

EZRA
(FIRMLY) Well, she won't. She's too good for you and the likes of yo
(TURNS TO DORA) Come here, Dora, for you shall always be my little
Dora. (SHE CROSSES UP TO HIM. HE PUTS ARM AROUND HER) And I shall be
proud to call you daughter. (TO EDWARD) Take her, my boy and my
blessings abide with you both. (PASSES HER TO EDWARD) THEN TURNS TO
BARTON) See here, Barton, two years ago I drove a person from my
door, but I've learned that I drove the wrong person. Now things
are likely to be kinder lonesome around here from now on. (FIRMLY)
Mr. Barton, sir. (POINTS TO C. D.) I'm now telling you to leave my
house and never let me see you here again--Get out!

HARVEY
Oh very well. I wish you all much joy in your re-united family.
(EXITS C.)

LOUISA
Well, I'm glad he's gone. I never did like that man.

EZRA
At last peace has come to my poor old heart. (HOLDS HAND OVER THEM)
Bless you my children, bless you. (DORA AND EDWARD EMBRACE)

RUBE
(ENTERS C. CALLS OFF AFTER BARTON) Good bye, Mr. Barton. Gosh but
he's mad, haw, haw, haw. (EZRA GETS PIPE AND SLOWLY LIGHTS IT)

(CURTAIN)

END OF THE PLAY.